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The families explore treatment opportunities and grapple with the struggle of living with their child's condition.21User reviews1Critic reviewSign in to rate and Watchlist for personalized recommendationsSign inSuggest an edit or add missing contentby what name was A Dangerous Son (2018) officially released in Canada in English?AnswerYou have no recently viewed pages Amidst the controversy of the release of the second season of "13 Reasons Why," there has been a quieter release of a documentary, "A Dangerous Son." This HBO film looks closely at the personal lives of three families struggling to find help for their children. Here's why it's worth a viewing:1. This is real life. While the drama surrounding "13 Reasons Why" may draw you in, "A Dangerous Son" gives you a look into the homes of real people. These families are honest, vulnerable and raw; allowing the public an inside view into lives that outsiders rarely have.2. One in five. One in five children ages 13 to 8 have, or will have, a mental illness. Further, 43.8 million adults will experience mental illness in a given year. This means if you and your family are untouched by mental illness, you undoubtedly know several people who are affected whether you know it or not.3. We feel judged. If you have a child who struggles, you know even the most basic thing like a trip to the store or getting on the bus in the morning to go to school can be full of challenges. We see the other parents looking at us and maybe even commenting, "You should be able to control your child," or, "Have you tried X-Y-Z?" And yes, we've tried X-Y-Z and A-B-C and even 1-2-3, but it's not enough.4. Asking for help is hard. When our children struggle with mental illness, a lot of feelings come up for us. We might feel embarrassed, guilty or ashamed. Asking for help requires us to admit we don't have it all figured out and we don't have all the answers.5. We are doing our best. If a parent is saying they need help, listen to us. Believe us. Help us.6. Help isn't always available. Even when parents summon the courage to ask for help, the help we need isn't always available. While private supports may be available to those with financial means there are often no beds available when a youth is in crisis.7. No one wants to talk about it. Mental health stigma is alive and well. When a child is hospitalized for psychological reasons, communities do not rally in the same way they might if your child had a physical illness. As one mom stated in the documentary, "Mental illness is not a casserole disease."8. We want to be heard. Despite our struggles, we do know what's best for our children and we want to be heard. Often when we are in crisis, we become accustomed to being told what to do. Please ask us for our thoughts and feelings and don't make decisions without us.9. There is no magic or perfect cure. If there were an easy fix, we would have figured it out by now. Diagnoses and prescription medications are often a guessing game and every child is different. Sometimes solutions come from thinking outside the box and a variety of supports discovered through nothing more than trial and error.10. Support systems are crucial. Families need supports, both formal and informal. Even if our children are feeling supported, we, as the parents, are often left feeling lost, confused, overwhelmed and isolated ourselves. It is important for parents to feel supported by family, friends, neighbors and professionals so that we can find ways to take care of ourselves in the midst of supporting our children.11. All youth and families have strengths. It is only by focusing on these strengths that we will find a path forward.12. Early treatment changes the trajectory. By utilizing universal screenings through pediatricians, schools and communities, we can identify youth in need of supports before reaching the point of crisis. To quote the film, "Treatment before tragedy." Change is possible.13. There is always hope. Always. Even in darkest times, we must work to maintain a hopeful outlook. Perhaps that hope is for a new medication or an innovative therapy or perhaps that hope is simply for the sun to shine tomorrow and for the next day to be better than the day before.Have you watched "A Dangerous Son"? What are your thoughts? Do you have a child who struggles with their mental health? I'd love to hear from you!This article originally appeared on Medium.We want to hear your story. Become a Mighty contributor here. Reddit and its partners use cookies and similar technologies to provide you with a better experience. By accepting all cookies, you agree to our use of cookies to deliver and maintain our services and site, improve the quality of Reddit, personalize Reddit content and advertising, and measure the effectiveness of advertising. By rejecting non-essential cookies, Reddit may still use certain cookies to ensure the proper functionality of our platform. For more information, please see our Cookie Notice and our Privacy Policy. This HBO documentary explores the struggle of three moms who are trying to find mental health services for their aggressive sons. A Dangerous Son tells the story of families with sons who have disorders that lead to explosive, violent behaviors. These kids are a danger to their families and themselves - but there are few options for mental health services. The documentary doesn't go into the diagnoses of the children but does mention the autism spectrum, intellectual disability, and schizoaffective disorder. While our children may have different diagnoses, the issues are the same for every parent struggling with a child who has violent behaviors. The themes are eerily familiar: The documentary is headlined by Liza Long who wrote the viral blog post, "I am Adam Lanza's Mother," in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook school shooting. If you haven't read it, here's an excerpt: I live with a son who is mentally ill. I love my son. But he terrifies me...In the wake of another horrific national tragedy [Sandy Hook], it's easy to talk about guns. But it's time to talk about mental illness.Liza Long, I am Adam Lanza's mother If you haven't read it I highly recommend Liza Long's book, The Price of Silence: A Mom's Perspective on Mental Illness. The lack of mental health treatment for kids with a propensity for violence is a national tragedy. It's impacted Liza Long's family and my own. And in some cases it spills out into our schools and communities. A Dangerous Son is a well made, compelling documentary that helps raise awareness around the difficulties of parenting a child who has violent behavior and the struggle to find help. Have you seen it? Drop a comment below to share your thoughts. Interviews have been condensed and edited for clarity. Source: Interview photos featured originally on Zimbio On Monday night, HBO released director Liz Garbus' documentary, A Dangerous Son. The 90-minute film features three mothers who struggle immensely to find proper help for their emotionally disturbed sons. Audience members who had never dealt with children facing severe mental illness described the piece as heartbreaking and difficult to watch. However, parents of mentally ill children displayed a very different reaction; they felt a sense of validation and hope. They believe that this film could serve as the first major step in changing the public's judgmental perception of children with mental illness and their families. Parents should be supported, rather than shamed, by their communities. Director, Liz Garbus first became inspired to produce A Dangerous Son after reading Liza Long's controversial essay, "I am Adam Lanza's Mother." Long wrote the blog post two days after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, in which 20-year-old Adam Lanza murdered 20 first-grade students, five faculty members, and his mother. Long's essay detail her family's endless struggle to find proper help for her son, Eric, who would later be diagnosed with Bipolar I disorder. "This problem is too big for me to handle on my own. Sometimes there are no good options...I am sharing this story because I am Adam Lanza's mother. I am Dylan Klebold's and Eric Harris's mother. I am James Holmes's mother. I am Jared Loughner's mother. I am Seung-Hui Cho's mother. And these boys—and their mothers—need help. In the wake of another horrific national tragedy, it's easy to talk about guns. But it's time to talk about mental illness." Garbus described feeling heartbroken after reading Long's blog post. "I knew there was another side to the story that needed to be shared. These mothers needed help and had nowhere to turn," she explained. Garbus believes that a A Dangerous Son will open up the door to a much-needed dialogue about the way we mistreat those with mental illness. Long term, she hopes the documentary will promote political changes that will result in greater allocation of state and federal funding toward mental health facilities. A Dangerous Son addresses the general sense of apathy, and more often condemnation, that other families display towards parents (particularly mothers) of children with mental illness. When any child, regardless of his or her psychiatric well-being, acts out and hurts another person, the community's natural response is to assign blame. Stacy Shapiro, whose son Ethan was featured throughout the film, explained that other parents are often uncertain about how to react to her son's temper, which often results in severe emotional outbursts and physical violence. She described how this can become increasingly complicated when mentally ill children have a partial understanding of how their behavior affects others. "[Other parents] assume that simply because Ethan can differentiate between right and wrong, he has the ability to control his actions. Therefore, if he can control his actions, he is choosing to behave the way he does. Self-awareness is a double-edged sword. It is necessary for him to develop as person, but it makes other people less likely to give him the benefit of the doubt when things happen." Shapiro explained that Ethan's cognitive deficits result in his being unable to control himself in the moment. His emotional drivers overwhelmingly override his short-term decision-making skills. "Simply because he can recall his behavior after an outburst and recognize that it is wrong, does not mean that next time the same situation arises, he will have the ability to deal with it differently. It's a symptom of his illness. This is something that becomes increasingly confusing to the community as he becomes older." Edie Cooper, mother of William, described a similar sense of anger felt from other parents every time her son had a traumatic reaction to a seemingly mundane situation. She explained, "Every time William acts out, the first question asked is Where is the mother?...The best thing parents can do, looking from the outside in, is to understand in their look, in their smile, in their empathy that I am doing the best I can do." Stacy and Edie were both very grateful for the opportunity to be featured in the documentary. They hope that A Dangerous Son will allow other parents of children with mental illness to realize they are not alone in their struggle. Additionally, they believe that telling their stories will highlight the inadequacies in the mental health system families in the United States face when trying to get their children help. Stacy and Edie's optimism, despite their being let down by the system so many times, was commendable. "There are so many pieces of this puzzle—from the parents, to the school to the hospitals," explained Edie. "Every time there is a break in the chain, which prevents William from getting the help he needs, it causes him to feel as if I betrayed his trust....My hope is that one day we will have a [unified] system in place that will not require parents to be geniuses in order to get their children the help they need." Get the help you need from a therapist near you - a FREE service from Psychology Today. 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By rejecting non-essential cookies, Reddit may still use certain cookies to ensure the proper functionality of our platform. For more information, please see our Cookie Notice and our Privacy Policy. One in ten American children suffers from serious emotional disturbance and more than 17 million have experienced a psychiatric disorder. A DANGEROUS SON focuses primarily on three families in crisis, each struggling with a child's severe mental illness, desperately seeking treatment in the face of limited resources and support.Exposing cracks in a system that fails too many families, with potentially devastating consequences for the child or for others, the documentary debuts MONDAY, MAY 7 (8:00-9:30 p.m. ET/PT), on HBO, during Mental Health Awareness Month. The film is directed by Liz Garbus (HBO's "Nothing Left Unsaid: Gloria Vanderbilt & Anderson Cooper," "There's Something Wrong with Aunt Diane").The film will also be available on HBO On Demand, HBO NOW, HBO GO and partners' streaming platforms.A DANGEROUS SON highlights the cycle of counselor visits, medications, hospitalizations and encounters with law enforcement common to many children and families grappling with psychiatric disorders. The guilt and isolation parents feel can be overwhelming, as is the constant worry that their child may harm himself or herself, or others. And while treatment can greatly improve the outcome, appropriate care is often a luxury available only to those who can afford it, or who happen to live in states with free or affordable treatment.Emphasizing the importance of encouraging dialogue and providing care to those in need, A DANGEROUS SON focuses on three children with mental health and behavioral disorders. The documentary details their families' ongoing struggles to obtain treatment for the behavioral problems they exhibit.Subjects include:Ethan, a ten-year-old in Everett, Wash., wishes a "lifeguard" could save him from the uncontrollable anger that prompts outbursts in which he curses, hits his younger sister, Elexa, and violently pulls his mother Stacy's hair. Ethan's diagnoses include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) and high-functioning autism, and he is deemed "in crisis" by a state agency, qualifying him for residential treatment. After months on a waiting list, he's offered a place in Washington's only state-funded residential program. Following six months of treatment, Ethan returns home, equipped with skills to help control his anger. But the transition is not an easy one. Within hours, he breaks a rule and lashes out at his mom. Six months later, Stacy, who's now pregnant, says Ethan has been better after continuing in-home therapy, but she knows he could always regress.Vontae, an 11-year-old in Los Angeles, is quiet and withdrawn. His mother, Cora, has found notes saying he wants to die and hurt other people. After Vontae threatens to get a gun and shoot a teacher, the family is visited by Tony Belz, who heads up the School Threat Assessment Response Team of the LA County Department of Mental Health Emergency Outreach. Later, in a meeting, Belz's team says Vontae seems at risk of "suicide by cop." Vontae's unarmed father was shot by police, and Vontae often plays with a toy gun. After he is caught lighting fires around his apartment building, Vontae is detained by police and put in a group home. Vontae is then sent to live with an aunt when a court decides Cora's other kids aren't safe. Cora, who struggled with her own mental-health issues in the past, worries that Vontae is still not receiving adequate care.William, a 15-year-old from Aurora, Colo., is grappling with severe mental and developmental challenges. At a meeting with his counselor, William's divorced parents, Edie and Bill, tell William there is room for him in a group home, but he gets agitated and lashes out, leading Edie to call the police for help as a last resort. She says William started hearing voices at the onset of puberty and has become obsessed with James Holmes, the perpetrator of the 2012 mass shooting at an Aurora movie theater. William is admitted to the group home and released several months later; things are good for a while, but deteriorate when William starts acting out, and Edie again calls the police. Although William's mental-health professionals say he needs more time in a facility, the family's Medicaid has run out, leaving few options. Edie hopes that with structure William might be able to live semi-independently one day, but worries there will be an accident, or he'll harm himself.Among the mental-health experts and advocates interviewed in the documentary are: Dr. Thomas Insel, former director of the National Institute of Mental Health; Andrew Solomon, author of "Far from the Tree"; Virginia state senator Creigh Deeds, whose 24-year-old son Gus stabbed him before killing himself; and Liza Long, author of the essay "I am Adam Lanza's Mother," who speaks about her own struggles dealing with her son's mental health crises.A DANGEROUS SON is produced and directed by Liz Garbus; produced by Ted Gesing; edited by Sari Gilman; director of photography Gabriel Miller; original music by Paul Brill and Elizabeth Ziman. For HBO: senior producer, Nancy Abraham; executive producer, Sheila Nevins.Follow @HBOPR for more news and information. 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